

AIR WAR COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

A BEAR AT MY DOOR:
HOW TO STOP FUTURE RUSSIAN AGGRESSION

By

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Biography

LtCol William Stophel is assigned to the Air War College, Air University, Maxwell AFB, AL. LtCol Stophel graduated from East Tennessee State University in 2001 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice and Criminology and has a Master's degree in Military Studies from Marine Corps University. Prior to commissioning, he was an enlisted Marine in the Ordnance occupation field. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in April 1996 following completion of Officer Candidate School (OCS).



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Abstract

Today's military and political books, magazines, and internet discussions have seen a resurgence of the varying applications of small unit warfare. Known by names such as Small Wars, Hybrid, Asymmetric, 4th Generation, or Grey warfare; Guerilla warfare has seen a resurgence in the military vernacular of today. However, its theory and practice remains to operate Spartan like and independent of the larger conventional forces and using only what is available, striking when the enemy is most vulnerable and during heightened periods of friction or protracted periods of complacency. In essence, as Sun Tzu published in the *Art of War* during the 6th century B.C. a practicing guerilla warfare practitioner strives to operate "just as flowing water avoids the heights and hastens to the lowlands, so an army avoids strength and strikes weakness".¹

This paper is to provide historical application to the current plight faced by former satellite or buffer states of the United Soviet Socialist Republic. These states face a renewed Russia which is supported by an active, overwhelming, and powerful military. The only way for these states to protect their own sovereignty is to reinforce their existing militaries by instituting a conscription force with compulsory service, by arming the populace as a home guard or defense league, and by training to execute guerilla style warfare over a protracted period.

Introduction

In early spring 1781, a silver mist drifts across the murky black waters of the Pee Dee River surrounding Snow Island near Johnsonville, South Carolina. Secure within its damp and hidden embrace lives Francis Marion, the swamp fox of South Carolina. Over the past year Marion, in synergistic conjunction with Harry “Light Horse” Lee and under the direction of Gen Nathaniel Greene, delivered a series of stinging raids to the occupying red coats of Great Brittan which drove Lord Cornwallis and his army from the Carolinas assisted in the British defeat at Yorktown, Virginia.² The American government realized that its sparse fledgling army was no match for the British military and resorted to guerrilla warfare in the southern United States to wear down the Redcoats. These tactics assisted in the downfall of one Great Brittan’s finest military minds, Lord Cornwallis, who would eventually surrender a substantial force at Yorktown, Virginia in October.

Two hundred and ten years later and hundreds of miles from the humid swamps of South Carolina, in a country slightly smaller than the state of New Jersey another fight for independence was brewing. Slovenia, seizing upon the power shift resulting from the death of one of the world’s remaining dictators, President Josip Broz Tito, held free elections in which Milan Kučan, a former communist official, was elected president, and in December a referendum calling for a sovereign, independent Slovenia was endorsed by more than 90 percent of the voters.³ Yugoslavia President Slobodan Milošević instituted economic sanctions against the newly forming democracy in an attempt to retain control of the area. Slovenia persisted and declared independence from Yugoslavia. It also found itself under attack by the Yugoslav People’s Army two days later. Sensing the beginning of hostilities, “the Republic of Slovenia Presidency established a Contingency Operational Coordination Staff co-chaired by Igor Bavcar

and Janez Jansa. It was tasked with the coordination of security and defense preparations and in wartime.⁴” This allowed President Kučan to focus on diplomacy and execute national defenses through his security staff. Slovenia had planned and executed a well-rehearsed, coordinated and controlled, successful quest for independence from Yugoslavia by utilizing small unit and guerrilla tactics earning their place in history and the United Nations.⁵

Today’s military and political books, magazines, and internet discussions have seen a resurgence of the varying applications of small unit warfare. Known by names such as Small Wars, Hybrid, Asymmetric, 4th Generation, or Grey warfare; Guerilla warfare has seen a resurgence in the military vernacular of today. However, its theory and practice remains to operate Spartan like and independent of the larger conventional forces and using only what is available, striking when the enemy is most vulnerable and during heightened periods of friction or protracted periods of complacency. In essence, as Sun Tzu published in the *Art of War* during the 6th century B.C. a practicing guerilla warfare practitioner strives to operate “just as flowing water avoids the heights and hastens to the lowlands, so an army avoids strength and strikes weakness”.⁶

The purpose of this paper is to provide historical application to the current plight faced by former satellite or buffer states of the United Soviet Socialist Republic. These states face a renewed Russia which is supported by an active, overwhelming, and powerful military. The only way for these states to protect their own sovereignty is to reinforce their existing military infrastructure by instituting a conscription force with compulsory service to age 50, by arming the populace as a home guard or defense league, and by training and preparing to execute guerilla style warfare over a protracted period.

This paper will analyze the framework faced by current nation states that possess a historical background with the former United Soviet Socialist Republic and recommend varying actions based on current United States military doctrine and warfighting functions. Further it will discuss integration with already standing military forces, application of Special Forces and partnering with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries.

Today's political environment has seen the resurgence of Russian aggression and a desire to return to the days of the United Soviet Socialist Republic. Russian president Vladimir Putin has a flair for theatrics which has permeated the Russian hierarchy. Shirtless horse rides with media coverage, military incursion into Crimea days after the closing ceremony of the Olympics, or having his Russian Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov publish intent to invade Crimea in the *Military Industrial Courier*⁷ weeks before invading are just a sample of the current Russian aggressive posture. These vain and sometimes illegal actions have caused suspicions, fear and a watchful eye across the globe and more so in the former Warsaw Pact nations. Russia continues to increase its sphere of influence and a desire to return to the world stage as a regional Hegemon. Russia and President Putin have further branched into the Middle East supporting varying partners. Most of this support is to the Shiite lead majority governments of Syria (previously engaged in a civil war) and Iran (helping negotiate the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) but it is also assisting Iraq in its fight against the Islamic State. Current tensions within the region and disillusionment with the Saudi Arabian Sunni controlled Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OPEC) saturation of the oil market has had a major impact on the Russian economy further straining tensions within the former Cold War powerbroker.

Today's crisis in Ukraine has shown that no other sovereign nation is willing to take on Russian fanaticism with the exception of non-lethal aid and financial sanctions. Nations which

feels threatened by Mr. Putin and his “little green men” should take a whole of government approach to determining how to fight against a formidable foe and should be prepared to conduct independent action alone.

The annexation of the Crimean peninsula and further occupation of the Ukraine in 2014-2015 was an overt and covert action of the Russian government. Russian forces enter without identifying uniform insignia, compounded with initial denial by the Moscow while the Russian military seizes key terrain and critical infrastructure. This action was condemned by the United States, European Union and other Western nations. This incursion was later coined as a Gerasimov doctrine by military strategists and it allowed plausible deniability for a period of time until it was later confirmed by Moscow as support to Ukrainian pro-Russian population. The term ‘Gerasimov’ is named after Colonel Valery Gerasimov who planned and executed the Crimean and Ukrainian battle plan. Ukraine (specifically Crimea), a non-North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) state, was in possession warm water ports something US military leaders knew Russia has desired since the end of the cold war to complement its only other warm water port - Vladivostok. The Ukrainian port in Crimea is home to the Russian Black Sea fleet and has been a point of compromise and contention within the Ukraine in recent years. Seizing this port allows unfettered access to Russian naval forces and is a component of the Russian Anti Access / Area Denial (A2AD) strategy.⁸

Recommendations

Ukraine or other former USSR satellite states must be prepared to act alone in their own defense. Initially, a thorough and detailed government self-assessment should be completed quickly. A government self-assessment is very similar to an intelligence review of the operational environment to determine not only if an act of aggression or invasions will occur but

more importantly how to dissuade or prevent incursion by Russia. Primary this review is a determination if Russian forces will enter the bordering sovereign nation state. This requires that vulnerable nations ask varying questions: Historically, is the nation in question a former U.S.S.R. satellite state? Is the population of Russian descent and supportive of Russian intervention? Is Russia dependent on a resource present within our borders? Does the populace have strong ties to Russia? Answering yes to these questions may denote a risk within the sovereign nation and could become a recipient of Russian incursion and once this occurs what will be the impact? Is the occupied nation militarily capable of a quick ten day victory as in Slovenia or will it become a protracted engagement as currently being faced in the Ukraine?

Additionally, two critical recommendations that don't fit clearly below are that the invaded state strives to fight a protractive engagement. This will place the cost on Russia and their already unstable economy and as causality figures rise, will provoke Russian public opinion. Secondly, it should control the strategic message utilizing mass media capturing any and all negative Russian activity. This will portray to the world that Russia is involved in a criminal occupation of a sovereign nation. The following are recommendations to invoke thought, or as a place to start planning. Items denoted as blue force are friendly units whereas red forces are considered the enemy. These ideas are organized by the United States military war fighting function of Command and Control, Maneuver, Intelligence, Sustainment, Fires and Protection.⁹

Command and Control

The United States military joint dictionary defines Command and Control as: "The exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned and attached forces in the accomplishment of the mission. Also known as C2."¹⁰ Blue force

governments must establish C2 across government agencies particularly during a state of emergency or crisis. All aspects of government from military to trash collection should reside with the head of state during this crisis. This can be accomplished by an act of law or by directive, or any technique which the blue for government subscribes. This will provided the head of state with absolute authority during a time of crisis. Additionally, it allows the president to establish a war time / crisis staff responsible for the security of the nation. This staff may be publicized as in Slovenia or a shadow staff whose existence only known to very few government executives or agencies. This staff can execute the pre-established crisis actions necessary to slow down a Russian military advance and allow the leadership to engage the world population to execute executive powers or announce a call to arms.

Positive C2 requires a means to pass information to subordinate elements of government. It is imperative to maintain the ability to deliver information to the population. This information can consist of the current state of affairs or directing troop movements. Fiscal resources, time, and education must be invested to develop a state system which will not fail. It may be as simple as the use of spoken word utilizing cultural brevity codes, Morse code, or utilization of High Frequency (HF) radio waves (Citizens Band / Short wave) which are susceptible to jamming but this may be alleviated utilizing adaptive, distributed, reconfiguration techniques.¹¹ A common technique of red forces is to seize the means of communication, i.e. radio, television, printed news, or to control various internet sites. This allows the red force to broadcast messages and propaganda to local populations and/or to the world placing a Russian face on the crisis instead of the sovereign governments.

Modern militaries rely heavily on the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) which is a "satellite-based radio navigation system to provide all military, civil, and commercial users with

precise positioning, navigation, and timing”¹². The use of GPS also produces an overreliance on technology and is susceptible to slowing down invading forces. GPS jammers are inexpensive and easily procured. This will require invading forces to rely on maps, compasses, route signs and road markers which is a perishable skill and can further slow invading forces. The return to analog techniques will slow down movement of the invading forces and will also impact their movement / maneuver and power projection capabilities.

Maneuver

Maneuver is “1. A movement to place ships, aircraft, or land forces in a position of advantage over the enemy. 2. A tactical exercise carried out at sea, in the air, on the ground, or on a map in imitation of war. 3. The operation of a ship, aircraft, or vehicle, to cause it to perform desired movements. 4. Employment of forces in the operational area through movement in combination with fires to achieve a position of advantage in respect to the enemy.”¹³

Maneuver or movement is what the blue forces require and seeks to restrict from red forces. Red land entry can be deterred by clogging the major routes or highways which would force aggressor forces into less traveled thoroughfares. During the Slovenia Ten day war, Slovenian forces had great success slowing Yugoslav forces by clogging roads with all available large military, trash, and cargo trucks forcing red units to secondary routes.

Once a major convoy movement shifts to a secondary road, it becomes more susceptible to ambush. Terrain and egress routes become of primary importance. As denoted above, a wheeled convoy can be stopped by numerous techniques or even disoriented if depending on route markers and road signs which will disorient the invading red forces. The removal all traffic signs and route markers will canalize a wheeled force into a choke point where the first and last vehicle may be attacked and disabled. This will make all remaining vehicle susceptible

to destruction. It is recommended to hit hard and fast, and then egress out of the area as further red forces / units may be in support.

Rail has been used extensively to move forces and from place to place based on its ability to carry larger amounts of cargo and personnel relatively effectively. However, railroads travel with the terrain creating numerous opportunities for the saboteur. Overtly, rail can be delayed by numerous reasons from slow loading of cargo to disruptive passenger manifesting. Covertly, rail can be destroyed by explosive devices or merely finding a well hidden curve and unbolting the section of track. The force of a moving and turning train will cause it to jump the track.

Stopping an air movement is very similar to a road network but require fouling all available airfields. Aircraft or aviation support equipment would be appropriate but if it is not readily available, then any type of foreign object would work. Additionally, disabling lights, beacons or aircraft radio signals will disorient aircrews as well. This will stop all aircraft from landing but will also stop outgoing traffic. Furthermore, when landing, aircraft slow and are more susceptible to surface fires.

Maritime traffic can be deterred by mines or scuttling of craft within a harbor or by using anti-submarine nets. Additional consideration may be given to Maritime navigational aids, disabling tug boats, or points which ships require for docking as well as cargo handling equipment. Maritime vessels that cannot discharge their cargo will normally stay in the harbor until arrangements are made to discharge. This will further stop maritime flow into a port due to lack of space. Special force type units can also train with drager systems¹⁴ to covertly place mines or explosives on the hulls of cargo laden or empty ships. Dispatched / breached vessels will clog valuable port space.

Intelligence

Joint Publication 1-02 defines intelligence as “The product resulting from the collection, processing, integration, evaluation, analysis, and interpretation of available information concerning foreign nations, hostile or potentially hostile forces or elements, or areas of actual or potential operations.”¹⁵ Intelligence attempts to answer questions about the red force and what any the future may hold. It’s the best guess based on all available information and cultural understanding.

The majority of former Russian states still have a proportional population that speaks Russian, practices Russian culture or identifies themselves as Russian. This population would be very susceptible to assist Russia, or as occurred in Ukraine, a scapegoat for Russian incursion to support the separatists movement. Blue force governments must come up with a plan on how to deal with a disenchanted Russian minority. It may also be possible to sway this population through financial means or coercion. A group of former Russian separatists who are loyal to the blue force government, may be able to act unimpeded within Russia if hostilities occur to report intelligence or conduct acts of sabotage deep within Russia.

Sustainment

Arming the home guard should be done utilizing Russian type weapon systems. They are cheaper, readily available and easier to employ and maintain than US weapon systems. Additionally, every red force dispatched or captured provides another weapon; every enemy ammunition movement becomes a friendly resupply. Furthermore, weapons and ammunition should be issued and maintained with the military and home guard forces. This will prevent the need to distribute weapons once the crisis occurs or in beginning. This model for arming a home guard type force prescribes “A Kalashnikov in every home, an anti-tank weapon in every closet, and an Anti-Air weapon in every kitchen”. This is comparable to the Swiss model although

recent changes have centralized ammunition albeit readily available in every city / township instead of being issued to the members.¹⁶ Switzerland, along with other states such as Estonia and Poland, are already training and arming their respective populations.

Fires

Fires are “the use of weapon systems to create specific lethal or nonlethal effects on a target”¹⁷. In today’s world, a computer can be a non-lethal weapon and the majority of the world operates well within the net centric domain. Blue force governments must invest heavily in a cyber-network defense capability and should also possess cyber network attack abilities. This will allow detection of probing or an attempt to shut down networks as would occur in the early days of a red force operation. Red forces will attempt to attain information dominance, and as many systems are controlled by computers, such as banking, or hydro power plant management etc, control of critical infrastructure as well. It may seem farfetched but it would be possible to cripple a nation by a concerted well planned cyber network attack.

Protection

“Preservation of the effectiveness and survivability of mission-related military and nonmilitary personnel, equipment, facilities, information, and infrastructure deployed or located within or outside the boundaries of a given operational area”.¹⁸ Many nations exercise a home guard or defense league either as a primary means of defense or to augment a regular Army. This force should be an initial conscription (age 18-24) type military force with compulsory service (age 50) with annual two week training events and should be stationed in the member’s home town. The benefit of this is that the physical environment would be known, as well as, whom the key personnel and their locations. Foreigners or items which are out of place in the area would be readily and easily recognizable and this information should be provided to a

centralized intelligence collection unit that could provide a complete picture of the crisis.

Training this force could be easily accomplished but should include training for how to ambush, building improvised explosives, marksmanship, and first aid.

It is most important for blue forces to protect the population. However, free will of the populace doesn't always make this idea a viable option. Many groups will conduct mass protest against occupying red forces or even the actions of the blue government. Mass protests are easily blocked by force, however, smaller protests utilizing different routes or avenues of approach and capable of convergence may overwhelm an occupying force. Small contingences of protesters may easily find themselves behind the red blocking force. This may cause a red escalation of force which could result in higher civilian casualties.

Active Military Force

The current standing military force should be deployed and postured to defend the sovereign territory. Conventional artillery / ballistic missiles should have preprogrammed or on call targets which may be well within Russian borders. This will allow the invaded force to conduct retaliatory strikes when needed. Additionally, the positions should be easily dismantled and moved once rounds are expended. It would be a safe bet that Russian counter fire would be quickly calculated once the point of origin was determined. Aviation assets and personnel that well trained and possess the skill sets needed to operate more sophisticated military equipment should be placed / protected from the initial phases of Russian attacks. They may also be used to target friendly lines of communication (roads, bridges, rail etc) to slow advancing forces or used in a close air support role against Russian ground forces.

Strong contingent Special Forces units should be developed and trained to operate independently of numerous C2 nodes. They should be capable of attacking and destroying high

value and high payoff targets in a variety of environments and predominantly at night. “A high payoff target is a target whose loss to the enemy will significantly contribute to the success of the friendly course of action”.¹⁹ These Special Forces units will be capable at striking varying Russian units and personnel as well as critical infrastructure when needed. Furthermore, utilizing the pro- government Russian separatists will also enhance their abilities and chances for success.

Partnering

A susceptible government should take advantage of the NATO partnership for peace (PfP) program²⁰. This program allows non NATO partners to train with alliance members. It is an opportunity to learn best practices and attend NATO professional military education opportunities. This will also establish relationships with neighboring governments and alliance members. This may also be an opportunity to keep a NATO force within the borders on training opportunities. The presence of a NATO force may be seen as precursor to military aggression by Russia but it may also be a deterrence to any future plans Russia may possess. Furthermore, it will also showcase the abilities of the blue force nation and may deter Russian aggression or plans of future Russian aggression.

Conclusion

Russia is a former world superpower and is striving to return to its pre cold war hegemon status. In order to accomplish this task, it is willing to exert its influence into former Russian satellite states as has been witnessed in the Ukraine. In order to fight this type of technically advance force, one must return to guerrilla type warfare. However, it cannot be an unplanned and should not be poorly executed. Partnering with NATO and its Partnership for Peace program, exercising and training the current existing military along with home guard units, and executing guerilla style warfare will ensure the survival of the sovereign nation and will increase a national responsiveness and nationalistic identity.

In order to defeat this type of aggression, the application of strength from the population must be harnessed. Educating, training, and arming the populace will put them into an advantageous position of self-defense and striking a decisive blow to the enemy. In addition, they can be further organized to report intelligence gathering against the invading Russian forces as well as knowing who may be supportive of Russian involvement or impeding friendly force actions.

Any governments which feel susceptible to Russian aggression should execute this multifaceted proactive defense plan utilizing a whole of government approach including the government, military and the people. It is apparent that outside sovereign nations other than the belligerents will not become involved. Every attempt should be made to utilize the presence of western media to provide an unvarnished truth on the current situation as it unfolds over time. If a nation should decide to place this plan into action, it should be conducted as state business, on the world stage and if executed, this plan should be prepared for a protracted engagement.

Notes

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² Max Boot, *Invisible Armies: An Epic History of Guerrilla Warfare from Ancient Times to the Present* (New York & London: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2013), p?

³ <http://www.britannica.com/place/Slovenia/Government-and-society#toc214574> (assessed December 1, 2015)

⁴ Brigadier Janez J. Svajncer, "War for Slovenia 1991" <http://www.slovenija2001.gov.si/10years/path/war/> date accessed February 8, 2016

⁵ <http://www.unaslovenia.org/en> (assessed December 11, 2015).

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⁷ General Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation, The Value Of Science In Prediction, *Military-Industrial Kurier*, February 27, 2013 (accessed December 11, 2015)

⁸ Altman, Jonathan "Russian A2/AD in the Eastern Mediterranean: A Growing Risk". Naval War College Review (Newport, Rhode Island: U.S. Naval War College) **69** (1): 72.

⁹ Department of Defense, Joint publication 3-0, Joint Operations, 11 August 2011, III-1

¹⁰ Department of Defense, Joint publication 1-02, Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, Ammended 15 November 2015, 40.

¹¹ Naval Research Lab, Resistance to HF Jamming Interference in Mobile Radio Networks by an Adaptive, Distributed Reconfiguration Technique, Washington DC, 09 AUG 1984

¹² Ilib. 101.

¹³ Ilib. 149.

¹⁴ Drager systems are rebreathers which does not produce bubbles

¹⁵ Department of Defense, Joint publication 1-02, Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, Ammended 15 November 2015, 230.

¹⁶ LtGen Walter Knutti, "Spearhead of the Swiss Armed Forces: Switzerland" NATO's Nations and Partners for Peace, vol 52 no 2 (2007)

¹⁵ Department of Defense, Joint publication 1-02, Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, Ammended 15 November 2015, 172.

¹⁶ Ilib. 375.

¹⁷ Ilib 105.

¹⁸ http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50349.htm (accessed December 11, 2015).

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